

**WABASH RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION**

**Meeting Minutes – July 11, 2007**

**Little Italy Festival Stage, 150 Water Street, Clinton, Vermillion County, Indiana**

<b>Voting Members Present:</b> Carroll County – George Mears Cass County – Mercedes Brugh DNR – Steve Morris Knox County – Shane Cooper Miami County – Ken Einselen Parke County – Penny Cox (proxy) Sullivan County – John Gettinger Tippecanoe County – Norman (Lucky) Neiburger Vermillion County – Jim McFall Vermillion County – Diann C. McIntosh (alternate) Vigo County – Keith Ruble (alternate) Warren County – Louise Jewell	<b>Proxies:</b> Earnest Passwater to John Gettinger Steve Luther to Penny Cox  <b>Voting Members Absent w/o Proxy:</b> Adams County Allen County Fountain County Gibson County Huntington County Jay County Posey County Wells County
<b>Non-Voting Members Present:</b>	<b>Non-Voting Members Not Present</b> INDOT IDEM DNR Historic Preservation & Archaeology Indiana Office of Tourism Development
<b>Commission and DNR Staff Present:</b> Ron James – WRHCC Executive Director Jennifer Hubbard – DNR Administration Pool	<b>Guests:</b> Diana Bartlow – Parke County Steve Paloncy – Vermillion County Community Foundation Nancy Dal Sasso – Little Italy Festival Stanton Lambert – Wabash River Enhancement Corporation Kim Wilson – Purdue University

**CALL TO ORDER**

John Gettinger called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. John asked everyone to introduce themselves and the county or organization they represent.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE May 9th MEETING MINUTES**

John asked for approval of the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Lucky Neiburger made a motion to approve the minutes. Ken Einselen seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

John Gettinger announced that Ken Einselen was elected as the President of the Banks of the Wabash. John spoke of the success of Indiana Rivers Rally and of a meeting to be held later on this month to organize another Rivers Rally to take place in the next two years. Mercedes Brugh commented about the need to ask Hanover College to participate in the next Rivers Rally.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT (see attached)**

Ron James referred to his report that was distributed with the agenda and discussed the progress of his actions for the last two months, including the preparation and planning of Rivers Rally and its success. Ron also mentioned the success of Detrash the Wabash in Tippecanoe County, stating that there was an excellent turnout, and that there were hundreds of bags of trash, filling two large dumpsters, collected. Ron stated that more money was raised than was spent making it possible for Banks of the Wabash to expand the program in the future. Ron also mentioned a successful DeTrash event that took place at Cicott Park in Warren County.

## **FINANCE REPORT (see attached)**

Steve Morris of DNR distributed an end of year commission financial report. Steve stated that no money has been spent for the new fiscal year that started on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Water Trail**

Ron James announced that the bridge signs were ordered and that the funds have been encumbered. Ron stated he is researching invasive species best management practices for the water trail map key. Ron noted he hopes to utilize Izaak Walton materials, in part to entice their Outdoor America magazine editor to publish an article about the Wabash River Water Trail and our corridor. Ron announced the Water Trail grand opening in Vermillion County will be on Labor Day at the Little Italy Festival (pending finalization of details).

### **Banks of the Wabash (BOW)**

Ken Einselen announced that he was elected president of the Banks of the Wabash. He stated that the Banks of the Wabash commission are going to be distributing clean up kits for the Detrash the Wabash. Ken announced that BOW will continue to organize different chapters of BOW for each county. He stated that the newly formed multi-county Towpath Trail organization has recently signed on as a chapter of BOW. Steve Paloncy suggested the community foundations as a good starting point for organizing county chapters. Steve Morris commented that the latest BOW newsletter was well done and truly reflected the new corridor wide focus for Banks of the Wabash.

### **Legislative**

Lucky Neiburger stated he would like to start organizing well in advance of the next legislative session. After some discussion, Lucky suggested bringing more ideas to the next meeting.

### **Wabash and Erie Canal Towpath Trail**

Stan Lambert reported the group was putting together an organizational structure and setting a course of action. Stan talked about a proposed trail workbook project that would provide a very detailed mile by mile description of the Towpath Trail. Stan suggested the WRHCC might be able to provide assistance on this project. Ron James thought a tremendous amount of man hours would be involved and would take up all of his time unless more volunteers are found.

Stan Lambert introduced Kim Wilson to detail a partnership with Purdue University to study the River. The project is called Living Laboratories on the Wabash. As part of the project two water quality monitoring stations will be added sometime in September. Kim requested a letter of support from the commission for a 319 grant application for the project. Lucky Neiburger made a motion to write a letter of support. Ken Einselen seconded the motion and it was approved.

## **Upper Wabash River Basin Commission**

Ron James stated that he has obtained proposed final changes to the 319 water quality management plan and that the plan should be implemented by August of 2010. Ron has a CD of the plan available.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Riverfest**

Lucky Neiburger reported Riverfest made a successful transition from dragon boats to voyager canoes. However, there was not as much advertising and attendance was down. The WRHCC had an exhibit booth present during the event with the help of Don & Louise Jewell.

### **River Odyssey**

Ron James stated that this was the last commission meeting before the auction of the paintings in Carmel in late August. Ron suggested each county may want to consider the opportunity to acquire a painting from along their section of river. Ron also reminded commissioners that a percent of the auction proceeds will be donated to Banks of the Wabash. Ron announced that Banks of the Wabash had selected the painters, David Dale and Jim Faulkner, as recipients of an education award that will be presented to them prior to the auction.

### **W.R.H.C. Community & River Road sign**

The Community and River Road signs have been sent to DNR purchasing for the bid process.

### **National River Rally**

Louise Jewell reported the National River Rally was very informative and well worth her attendance. Louise moved to send the executive director and one other commission member to the National River Rally every year. Lucky Neiburger seconded the motion and it carried.

### **Indiana Rivers Rally**

All of the commissioners attending the Indiana Rivers Rally reported that it was a great success.

### **Video Travelogue**

Ron James stated that he hasn't received any themes or stories from any of the commissioners. He stressed that he needed at least two or three minutes about the sites of the Wabash in each county. Ken Einselen was nominated as chairman of the committee and Keith Ruble and Shane Cooper volunteered to help.

### **Mid America Trails**

Steve Morris stated that he was unable to participate on the last conference call, but assured the commission that the planning for this was moving right along. The commission's \$1000 sponsorship was submitted and Steve and Ron are planning to attend.

### **Budget and revisions**

There was no discussion.

### **Session with Director Carter**

John Gettinger, Lucky Neiburger and Ron James reported on the recent meeting with DNR Director, Rob Carter. Topics discussed included water trail boating camps and access sites, land based trail connections to DNR properties, and getting non-voting commission members more actively involved with the commission. Securing funding for the commission was a major topic.

This included asking Director Carter to help with being able to receive royalties from the extraction of oil and gas under the navigable rivers of Indiana, including the Wabash River.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Oil and Gas Royalties**

Louise Jewell made a motion for the Commission to approve the investment of oil & gas royalties, arising from leases of the areas under the navigable waterways of Indiana, directly into the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund, especially those arising from ground under the Wabash River. A change in Indiana Code, which currently attributes these proceeds to the General Fund (unlike proceeds from under other state-owned real estate), will need to be pursued. Both Herschel McDivitt & Rob Carter were reported as having no objection to this change (per conversations with Ron J.) Mercedes Brugh seconded the motion; approved.

### **Banks of the Wabash Mini-Grants program**

Ron James stated that the deadline is on October 1<sup>st</sup> with a maximum of five hundred dollars and a minimum of one hundred dollars. The project should be completed by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **State Fair Attendance**

Ron James stated that the Wabash Heritage Corridor will have a booth at the State Fair for Visit Indiana Day on August 17, 2007.

### **Paddlefest Attendance**

Ron James asked the commissioners to sign up for Paddlefest at New Harmony. Louise Jewell made a motion for the commission to pay for commission members' Paddlefest registrations if members wear their blue shirts to the event. George Mears seconded the motion and it carried.

### **Lafayette Office**

Lucky Neiburger made a motion to allow Hoosier Environmental Council to share the commission office space in Lafayette. Louise Jewell seconded the motion and it carried. Norm N. will follow-up and pursue permission from the landlord.

### **Status of Reflections**

Ron James stated that he hasn't received any articles, save the one from Gibson County/ Sherrill Marginett, as requested from selected commissioners. He opened the request up to any county or commissioner for appropriate articles.

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Mercedes Brugh announced that Logansport was received a \$150,000 Recreational Trail Program grant award.

George Mears announced the Burnett Creek Arch restoration project is moving along in planning, however additional funding may be necessary to enhance the area.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

The next meeting will be held September 12, 2007, Nature Center, Quabache Trails Park, 3500 N. Lower Fort Knox Road, Vincennes, Indiana.